

DEDICATED EXPERIENCED SUPPORT

SHARE

sharecancersupport.org

Information for Everyone About Metastatic Breast Cancer



Welcome to SHARE!

SHARE is a national nonprofit that supports, educates, and empowers anyone who has been diagnosed with women's cancers, and provides outreach to the general public about signs and symptoms. We are a compassionate community of knowledgeable survivors, women living with cancer, and healthcare professionals. We are ready to listen to your concerns, respond to your questions, and provide education to help you make sense of your diagnosis and treatment.

SHARE is dedicated to serving women of all races, cultures, backgrounds, and identities. Because no one should have to face metastatic breast cancer alone.

SHARE is here for you and all of our services are free.

Metastatic Breast Cancer: What You Should Know

Metastatic Breast Cancer or MBC, (also called stage IV) is breast cancer that has spread to another part of the body. Sometimes MBC develops months or years after an early stage diagnosis. A small percentage of people are diagnosed with MBC as a first diagnosis. Many people diagnosed with MBC wish they had known some of the information provided in this brochure. Although the information can be scary to some, it is meant to educate and empower people with knowledge that may help identify metastatic breast cancer.

Did You Know?

- **MBC is not curable but it is treatable.**
- **About 30% of women with early stage breast cancer will develop MBC.**
- **Black women have a higher rate of death from breast cancer than White women.**
- **Men can also develop MBC.**



MBC

Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms of MBC can vary widely depending on the location of the cancer. When breast cancer travels to other parts of the body, it is said to have metastasized. The most common places for breast cancer to metastasize are the bones, lungs, liver or brain.

Keep in mind that many of these symptoms can happen with other conditions that are not cancer.

Symptoms of MBC Bone Metastasis:

- New pain that is sudden and long lasting
- Pain in the rib area, spine, pelvis, legs or arms
- Numbness or weakness in an area of the body
- Fatigue, weakness, nausea, loss of appetite

Symptoms of MBC Lung Metastasis:

Lung metastasis may be difficult to detect because often there are no symptoms.

If lung metastasis does cause symptoms they may include:

- Shortness of breath, cough
- Pain in the lung
- Wheezing
- Coughing up blood or mucus

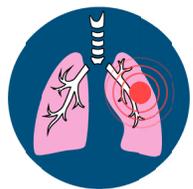
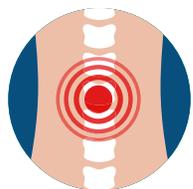
Symptoms of MBC Brain Metastasis:

- Changes in speech or vision
- Headaches
- Memory issues
- Seizures
- Personality or mood changes

Symptoms of Liver Metastasis:

- Pain or discomfort in the abdomen
- Weight loss, appetite loss
- Bloating
- Fever
- Fatigue and weakness
- Swelling in the legs
- Yellow tone to the skin or eyes

If you have symptoms that worry you, be sure to see a doctor right away.



Risk Factors for MBC

A risk factor is anything that increases a person's chance of developing a certain illness. Having one or more risk factors associated with a disease does not mean you will definitely develop that disease. Discussing risk factors with a doctor can help determine your personal level of risk.

Whether metastasis happens depends on several factors, including:

- The type of breast cancer: The microscopic pattern of a cancer (including features such as grade, hormone receptor expression and HER2 expression) can provide clues regarding likelihood of developing MBC.
- Faster growing cancers may be more likely to metastasize than slower growing cancers.
- The stage of the cancer when first diagnosed.
- Tumor size may be a risk factor for developing MBC.
- Nearby lymph nodes that contain cancer may be an indication of higher risk to developing MBC.
- Incomplete treatment of a breast cancer when initially diagnosed.

Testing for MBC

Often, those who are diagnosed with early stage breast cancer undergo a series of tests to determine if the cancer has spread to other places in the body.

Bone Scan - will determine if breast cancer has spread to the bones

CT Scan - will help doctors discover cancer that may have spread to the chest and/or abdomen or other internal organs

PET Scan - often combined with a CT scan to determine if cancerous cells accumulated anywhere else in the body

Chest X-Ray - may be used to see if cancer has spread to the lungs

Blood Tests - your doctor may want to do tumor marker (blood) tests to gauge response to treatment

Your doctor might advise you to undergo other testing that may help diagnose or rule out MBC.



How to Be Your Own Best Advocate

- Report any symptoms that are not “normal” for you to your doctor.
- Ask as many questions as you need to feel certain you understand.
- Know your family history.
- Call SHARE to speak with someone who can provide information, guidance and support.

If you've been recently diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer, we're here to help you.

**Toll Free Metastatic Breast Cancer Helpline: 844.275.7427, option 6
sharecancersupport.org**



Check out SHARE's Educational Programs and Support Groups

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